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LETTER DATED 3 MARCH 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo concerning the appalling murder of Western tourists in the Republic of Uganda.

The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo strongly condemns this barbarous act and any criminal intent to establish a culture of genocide in the region.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) André Mwamba KAPANGA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs strongly condemns the taking hostage of 13 American, British, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand and Swiss tourists and the subsequent murder of many of them. The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is deeply concerned at this latest attempt to destabilize the Great Lakes Region and presents its condolences to the stricken families and to the friendly countries of which the victims are nationals. It once again calls upon the international community and all people of goodwill to ensure that everything is done to:

- Set in motion an international investigation to identify the authors of this appalling massacre and to establish impartially the responsibilities of the parties involved.

  In this connection, the Democratic Republic of the Congo denies all responsibility for these events, since they occurred in the Bwindi gorilla reserve in Kisoro district in Ugandan territory, some 20 kilometres from the Congolese border which is illegally occupied and controlled by the Rwandan and Ugandan armed forces.

- Condemn any criminal intent to establish a culture of genocide in the region and to use innocent people and human lives for political ends.

- Make a positive contribution to rooting out all the underlying causes of the tension prevailing in the Great Lakes Region.

- Give priority to a peaceful solution in order to promote in the Great Lakes Region a culture of respect for the principles of peaceful coexistence among States and for the universal rules of democratic governance.

(Signed) David M'BWANKIEM